

Office Action Response
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Second, the applicants have also deleted the references in their claims to "rolling" the BSP over the MEA, since the examiner issued an art-based rejection of that embodiment. In his August 1, 2003 office action, the examiner found that:

While the bending over and crimping of the edge would structurally provide a different configuration (and thus be given patentable weight to an overlapped edge portion of the separator plate), the rolling process does not clearly requires such an overlap to be present.

August 1, 2003 office action at 5.

Thus, the examiner indicated that the claims would be allowed if the "rolled" embodiment were deleted, since the "bent" and "crimped" embodiments "provide a different configuration" that should be given "patentable weight."

The applicants have now deleted all references to the "rolled" embodiment in their claims, thereby clearly distinguishing their invention from the prior art.

With these two changes, the application is now in condition for allowance, and the applicants respectfully request that the examiner exercise his discretion to allow these after-final amendments. The amendments offered in this response are made without prejudice to the applicants' right to pursue different and/or broader claims through a continuation, continuation in part, or divisional application.